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AUTHOR Melenyzer, Beverly J.

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ABSTRACT

Preparing inservice and preservice teachers and administrators to meet the challenges of student diversity requires collaboration among teacher educators, state leaders, school practitioners, and the community. The Urban Living-Learning Teaching Center partnership is designed to meet this challenge. The partnership includes faculty, administrators, and preservice teachers from two state universities, a liberal arts college, and an inner-city school district. The Center's model is comprised of five components: urban living experiences, learning opportunities, urban teaching, community awareness, and cultural experiences. A series of seminars, workshops, and field trips complement the model and provide opportunities for university faculty, preservice and inservice teachers, and partners from basic education to collaborate on critical issues in urban education. The focus of these meetings include: the multicultural curricula, the urban student, cultural backgrounds, and student learning styles. Three forms of evaluation and assessment are conducted each semester and serve as data for program evaluation: One Minute Evaluation forms, Urban Center Exit Questionnaire, and The Urban Center Summative Evaluation. Preliminary findings regarding preservice teachers indicate that the program is successful in preparing students for urban teaching experiences. University faculty report that they are better prepared to share information and resources, model instructional strategies, and mentor preservice and inservice teacher and administrator candidates in meeting the demands of diverse student populations. Partnerships between universities and public schools have encouraged generation of new, creative ideas, innovative curriculum developments, and more mutual understanding. (Contains 19 references.) (Author/NAV)

ED 395 901

THE URBAN LIVING-LEARNING TEACHING CENTER: COLLABORATION IN PREPARING TEACHERS FOR URBAN SCHOOLS

A Paper Presented at the
8th International Conference of the International Association
for the Study of Cooperation in Education
Lewis & Clark College
Portland, Oregon
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Dr. Beverly J. Melenyzer
Associate Professor
Elementary and Early Childhood Department
California University of Pennsylvania
California, Pennsylvania 15419
Phone: (412) 938-5892
E-Mail "Melenyzer@cup.edu"

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"The Urban Living-Learning Teaching Center
Collaboration in Preparing Teachers for Urban Schools"

ABSTRACT

Preparing inservice and preservice teachers and administrators to meet the challenges of student diversity requires collaboration among teacher educators, state leaders, school practitioners and the community. The Urban Living-Learning Teaching Center Partnership is designed to meet this challenge. The partnership includes faculty, administrators, and preservice teachers from two state universities, a liberal arts college, and an inner-city school district. The Center's model is comprised of five components which include; urban living experiences, learning opportunities, urban teaching, community awareness, and cultural experiences. A series of seminars, workshops and fieldtrips complement the model. These experiences are designed to provide opportunities for university faculty, preservice and inservice teachers, and partners from basic education to collaborate on critical issues in urban education. The focus of these meetings include; the multicultural curricula, the urban student, cultural backgrounds and student learning styles. Qualitative research findings regarding program effectiveness and student successes are presented.

INTRODUCTION

At the conclusion of this session participants will acquire:

An understanding of how collaboration among state, school, university, and community agents supports the implementation of urban and multicultural training for inservice and preservice teachers;

An understanding of the need for broad-based collaboration in implementing and funding successful teaching experiences in urban-multicultural education (the importance of collaborative planning and training is emphasized);

A description of effective practices and strategies for making curricular changes in teacher preparation and pedagogy that improve the performance of teachers in urban and multicultural environments;

A personal meaning of collaboration and multicultural preparation as it relates to urban settings.

OVERVIEW

Teacher preparation programs are being challenged to ready students for the demands of cultural diversity and the challenges of urban education and living. A living center in Pittsburgh, biweekly seminars, field trips and the opportunity to teach in an urban environment are all components of the Urban Living-Learning Teaching Center. Dr. Beverly Melenyzer, California University of Pennsylvania and Dr. Ann Liedel-Rice, Slippery Rock University of Pennsylvania have developed a collaborative with the Pittsburgh City School District, Carlow College and various community agencies in order to provide university students, from suburban and rural backgrounds, opportunities to acquire urban teaching experiences and develop an understanding and appreciation for urban life and how it impacts the educational and social development of inner-city youth.

The Urban Center's model includes living, learning, teaching and cultural components. Students are provided opportunities to reside in designated facilities near their schools and community agencies. As "residents" of the school community, students attend local functions, visit community sites, engage in cultural events, and experience a variety of educational resources. Multicultural seminars are conducted at the Center by practitioners, community members, university faculty and include follow-up visits to city magnet and multicultural schools and community agencies.

The Urban Center has been recognized and endorsed by state and local organizations such as the Pittsburgh School-University Collaborative, the PA Society of Urban Scholars, the PA Academy for the Profession of Teaching, the H.C. Frick Education Commission, and the PA State System of Higher Education. Grants and awards from state and private foundations support many of the Center's activities.

LITERATURE REVIEW
THE CHALLENGE

The demographic diversity among our students and the teaching population is unparalleled. Results from urban studies (Pallas, Natriello, & McDill, 1989) reveal that currently one-fourth of the nation's largest urban school districts are comprised of a majority of students from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Future trends reveal that the twenty-first century will continue to be dominated by cultural and ethnic diversity. Banks (1992) and Graham (1987) suggest that by the year 2000, one of every three residents of the US will be a person of color, and Au (1993) predicts that by the year 2020 nearly half of the school-age population will belong to ethnic and cultural groups other than European American. These social and demographic changes present several challenges for urban researchers, teacher educators, and administrators who often find teachers ill-prepared to meet the demands of a student population that is becoming more diverse in terms of race, class, language, and ethnic background.

At the school district level, researchers (Grant & Secada,1991) are concerned with the lack of diversity among the teaching population and the challenge to meet the needs of a more complex student population. They predict that future faculties will remain primarily white and female. These trends, coupled with Haberman's (1992) prediction that the current shortage of teachers in urban schools will continue to exceed teacher vacancies in rural and suburban schools, present additional challenges for a changing school environment.

Administrators and faculty at institutions of higher education are also being challenged by changing demographics. Within the colleges of education, teacher educators, those responsible for training teachers, continue to reflect a population that is predominately white and male. Many teacher educators recognize that they must prepare preservice teachers for new challenges in urban classrooms; however, many lack experiences and knowledge about urban teaching and are unfamiliar with urban curricula. These educators need to experience the urban environment and be empowered to determine how diverse learners should be taught, which means they must understand their language, their behavior and culture.

In response to these challenges, supporters of urban and multicultural education suggest that college and university faculty modifying the educational environment so it reflects the ethnic diversity of the American society (Banks, 1991; Bennett, 1995; Hilliard, 1992). Curriculum and materials need to be designed to respond to the needs of all ethnic and immigrant groups. Higher education faculty must respond to these issues by providing multicultural classes in urban education as well as classroom and urban field experiences that will empower inservice and preservice teachers to recognize diverse student populations as children who can be motivated to learn, think creatively, grow in self-esteem and obtain high levels of academic achievement.

URBAN LIVING-LEARNING TEACHING CENTER COLLABORATIVE GOALS

In an effort to meet the challenges of preparing teachers for urban and multicultural education, the Urban Living-Learning Teaching Center collaborative has endorsed the following goals:

(1) To expand university faculties' and preservice teachers' knowledge base and experiences in multicultural and urban education and to promote an appreciation of cultural diversity; (2) To develop a model of multicultural curriculum for urban education; (3) To provide university faculty and preservice teachers hands-on and visual examples of the strategies and content used to teach multicultural curriculum in an urban setting; (4) To provide faculty with a foundation for initiating curricular changes in teacher education programs that will improve the preparation of teachers for urban and multicultural environments; (5) To encourage on-going discourse between university faculty, preservice teachers and practitioners from urban classrooms; (6) To promote communication and cooperation among universities and basic education in order to link educators with public schools and the actual problems within the schools.

THE URBAN LIVING-LEARNING TEACHING CENTER MODEL

Since 1991, the Urban Living-Learning Teaching Center collaborative has sought to build an awareness of urban and multicultural education among university faculty, administrators, and preservice teachers. The Urban Living-Learning Teaching Center Model is a product of this endeavor. The Model is comprised of the following components (refer to the appendices for graphic representation):

1. *Living Component:* Students from rural and suburban communities become sensitized to the urban community as they become "inner-city residents" during their internship. Residency is provided through collaboratives among the rural state universities, urban community agencies, and an urban liberal arts college.

2. *Learning Component:* The model offers a series of seminars and field trips in which university and basic education faculty and administrators, preservice teachers and community members join together to experience programs which focus on; teaching urban youth, addressing various learning styles, developing an appreciation for cultural differences, and providing an understanding of the urban community and its resources. Seminars and field trips are conducted in partnership with experts from; urban studies, urban health and social agencies, urban education foundations, museums and institutes; urban master teachers and administrators; and, urban parents and community members.

3. *Teaching/Internship Component:* Students are placed in urban classrooms throughout the Pittsburgh City School District. Placements include; magnet schools, schools of international studies, teacher centers, academies, schools for the performing arts, scholars programs, and schools for students with special needs.

4. *Community Component:* The partnership with community agencies provides participants with opportunities to visit and volunteer at a variety of community agencies which serve the urban student. These include hospitals, community centers, educational and cultural institutions, and the local seminary and churches.

5. *Cultural Component:* Various cultural exchanges are provided through partnerships with the arts and humanities foundations. Participants are exposed to the cultural aspect of urban living as they attend the symphony, ballet, theater, and special events and presentations. Students attend a minimum of two cultural events a semester.

ORGANIZATION AND GETTING STARTED

Recruitment

A student's involvement in the Urban Living-Learning Teaching Center begins at the initial stage of recruitment with a positive presentation of the opportunity to student teach in an inner-city school. Slides and video clips of former urban student teachers are shared with potential candidates. Former urban student teachers, some who are currently teaching in urban schools, visit method classes and meet with interested students. Some students are immediately motivated to work with urban youth , while others take the information to review and make a final decision at a later date. Initial data is collected from all candidates.

Interested students are provided the opportunity to attend several meetings that are planned and monitored by a graduate student who participated in the urban program. The student and his or her mentor discuss films, articles, fears of the urban setting, and discuss other fears the student may have related to urban teaching. As a result of these meaningful discussions and shared excitement around urban teaching, a bond is usually established.

Selection

High expectations are held for candidates who select to student teach in the Urban Living Learning-Teaching Center. Each candidate is asked to write a brief rationale for selecting the urban program; submit grades for all method courses; list meaningful assignments and obtain two references from methods instructors. Partial criteria for selection is based upon Haberman's (1991) recommendations for urban teachers

such as: attitude, organizational skills, physical and emotional stamina, flexibility and academic background. The process of selection does not eliminate many students and encourages all faculty members to take a serious interest in the Urban Center. Students who are accepted into the program are sent a letter of congratulations which enhances a sense of pride and commitment.

Preparing To Teach Students of Diverse Backgrounds

Once a year a "special" workshop is conducted for all students who are accepted into the Urban Center. The purpose of this workshop is to reinforce students' aspirations for student teaching in an urban setting. The workshop is conducted by an African American who lived, attended, and taught in an inner-city school. The session focuses on understanding "who" the children are rather than "what" the children are (refer to Appendices "Preparing to Teach Students of Diverse Backgrounds" for student reactions).

Students also attend several orientation meetings where they meet other students who will be participating in the Urban Center program. Students exchange names, addresses and telephone numbers and arrange to commute to schools, dorm together and exchange aspirations for their upcoming teaching experience.

Culminating Activities

Each student engages in the four components of the Urban Living- Learning Teaching Center model. Their experiences are exciting and challenging; however, most students agree that the most exciting aspect of the cultural component is the "Cultural Dinner Celebration" in which student experience a "soul food" dinner and presentation by a local resident and chef. Following the dinner, students engage in the opportunity to share their most successful teaching experience with their colleagues. The evening is concluded with the award of the Urban Living-Learning Teaching Center Certificate. Students showcase certificates in their professional portfolios.

PROGRAM EVALUATION AND RESEARCH

Three forms of evaluation/assessment are conducted each semester and serve as data for program evaluation. The One-Minute Reaction Forms are distributed to participants at the conclusion of each presentation, workshop, seminar or fieldtrip. A list of summary comments are generated from the participants' reactions and reviewed by the coordinators. At the conclusion of each semester, participants are asked to complete the Urban Center Exit Questionnaire that provides a critique of the program and curriculum. A semi-annual program evaluation is conducted by the coordinators at the end of the fall semester. Results from the One-Minute Reaction Forms and the Urban Center Exit Questionnaires are analyzed for program strengths and weaknesses. Revisions in the spring schedule are made based upon these results.

The Urban Center Summative Evaluation is conducted at the conclusion of each academic year. The coordinators analyze all data and a revised program and curriculum is generated.

Ethnographic research is being conducted to determine how students are being prepared to enter urban teaching positions. Students, cooperating teachers, administrators and university faculty are being interviewed, video taped, observed and responding to surveys and questionnaires. Artifacts related to student experiences and performance are being collected and reviewed. These artifacts include; journal entries, successful experience reports, classroom observation reports, daily logs, portfolios, and teaching units.

Early analyses of these data have revealed some preliminary findings which suggest the program is addressing the needs of preparing preservice teachers for diverse and multicultural urban settings; assisting university faculty in expanding their knowledge base, teaching repertoire, and understanding of how to prepare teachers for the challenges of teaching in the inner city schools; and, establishing successful urban partnerships.

Preliminary Findings Regarding Preservice Teachers

Interview and questionnaire responses from administrators and cooperating teachers affiliated with the urban program indicate the program is successful in preparing students for urban teaching experiences.

Questionnaire and interview responses from student teachers indicate they feel prepared to teach in other urban schools and to teach students of multicultural and diverse backgrounds. Students indicate that the program's components (urban living, urban educational seminars, urban student teaching, and the community/cultural component) provide them with a comprehensive background in urban teaching.

The Pittsburgh Board of Education solicits applications from the Urban Living-Learning Teaching Center for full-time and substitute teaching positions.

Follow-up studies of graduates teaching in inner-city schools (Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, Detroit, Baltimore and Los Angeles) suggest these students are confident and knowledgeable about the issues they confront in urban classrooms.

Preliminary Findings Regarding University Faculty

At the university level, information and training from the seminars and field trips have assisted university faculty integrate multicultural and urban issues in their graduate and undergraduate classes and field service programs. Faculty report that they are better prepared to share information and resources, model

instructional strategies and mentor preservice and inservice teachers and administrator candidates in meeting the demands of a diverse student population.

Preliminary Findings Regarding Urban Partnerships

The Urban Living-Learning Teaching Center and seminar semesters in multicultural education have facilitated collaboration between universities (CUP and SRU) and public schools.

At the basic education level, practitioners report that the dialogue with university faculty around the research in urban and multicultural education has encouraged them to engage in teacher research, interpret and apply new ideas to their daily practices, and become more sensitive to issues affecting urban youth.

Administrators and supervising teachers report that the ongoing professional exchange and dialogue with Urban Center preservice interns has inspired them to incorporate new ideas and pedagogy into their current curriculum.

Community agencies report that the collaborative exchange with the universities and school district has enriched their understanding of education and urban youth and has resulted in increased program offerings.

PLANS FOR CONTINUATION

During the 1995-96 academic year, the coordinators and faculty from Slippery Rock and California Universities of Pennsylvania will pilot the Multicultural Curriculum for Urban Education. The coordinators will direct this pilot and be available to mentor faculty at their respective institutions. A network for sharing successful practices and innovations will be established via Internet, E-Mail, listserve groups, newsletters, action research, and the co-authoring of articles.

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APPENDICES

Urban Living-Learning Teaching Center
LEARNING THEMES

MAJOR GOAL:

To recognize diverse student populations as children who can be motivated to learn, think creatively, grow in self-esteem and obtain high levels of academic achievement.

THEMES:

Understanding the Culture: The Culturally Responsive Curriculum

Workshop "Preparing to Teach Students of Diverse Backgrounds"
Presentation of "Traveling Library and the Encouragement to Use Multicultural Literature"
Attendance at cultural events
Cultural Fieldtrips
- -Hill House Foundation & Pittsburgh In Partnership With Parents
- -Children's Hospital Drug and Alcohol Program
- -Family In Crisis Center Tour

Cultural Dinner
Community Tour
Visit to Church in African American Community
Presentation of Life In the Ghetto by Anika Thomas

Motivational Strategies

Whole Language Strategies for Elementary and Secondary Urban Classrooms
Cooperative Learning in the Urban Classroom
Problem Solving and Questioning Strategies in the Urban Classroom
Higher Ordered Thinking Skills in the Urban Classroom
Fieldtrip to Prospect Multicultural School
Carnegie Science Center Fieldtrip and Teacher Inservice Days

Classroom Management Strategies

Behavior Management and Urban Youth
Pittsburgh City School District Classroom Management Program
Discipline With Dignity
Simulations in the Urban Classroom

Supervising Teacher (role model)

Preliminary Interviews with student teacher, principal and site-liaisons
Dual assignments
Instructional Lead Teachers
Optional assignments
Observations & interviews
Cooperating Teacher Workshops

Challenge & Support

Student conferences regarding placements
Placement of 3 to 5 students per site
Living arrangements at Carlow College, YMCA, Pittsburgh
Recruitment Program
- -Pittsburgh City School District
- -Baltimore City School District

Follow-up visitations, surveys and on-going communications
Urban Center Newsletter
Networking
Journal
Creating a Professional Portfolio

SEMINARS AND ON-SITE VISITS TO COMMUNITY AGENCIES

The Urban Center provides a home base for urban student teachers and a facility for students to attend biweekly seminars relating to their concerns. "At time it was hard to be at school all day and come home for a seminar, but looking back they were very helpful," one participant explained. She added, "They [the seminars] helped to keep us thinking and maturing our ideas and methods as well as attitudes."

Field trips to observe successful urban teachers and the opportunity to visit community agencies has continuously shown a noticeable improvement and understanding of students' grasp of a culture that may be different than their own. Upon leaving the Hill House Community Center, a student teacher said, "I learned that many young and single parents care. They are making an earnest effort to improve."

Students teachers a the Urban Center have the opportunity to evaluate each seminar and on-site visit. As a result of participants evaluations, our seminars have changed from a repeat of methods to a more culturally responsive focus. The following 1995 Spring Semester Seminar Schedule is an example of the seminars offered to participants.

URBAN LIVING-LEARNING TEACHING CENTER
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
1995 SPRING SEMESTER

GENERAL GOAL: To recognize diverse student populations as students who can be motivated to learn, think creatively, grow in self-esteem and obtain high levels of academic achievement.

LOCATION: Carlow College ROOM: Aquinas Hall - Room 206

DATE	TIME	PRESENTERS/TOPICS
Jan. 26	4:15-6:30	Workshop on Classroom Management Mrs. Mary VanHorn, Urban Teacher
Feb. 9	4:15-6:30	Relating to Urban Students Ms. Jacqueline Clemm Urban Elementary Teacher Mr. John Taylor Urban Secondary Teacher

Feb. 23	4:15-6:30	Motivational Strategies Ms. Deborah Newcomer, Teacher
Mar. 9	4:15-6:30	Workshop on Understanding and Managing Disruptive Students Dr. Mary Anne Christ Urban Psychologist
Mar. 16	4:15-6:30	Self-Reflection Seminar Creating a Professional Portfolio Preparation for the visit to the Hill House Dr. Liedel-Rice and Dr. Melenyzer Urban Supervisors
Mar. 20	8:30 am - 12:30 pm	Visit Hill House Community Center Mr. James Henry, Director Ms. Carol Crumby, Parent Programs
Apr. 6	4:15-6:30	Workshop on Relating to Urban Parents Mr. Jack Zewe, Urban Teacher
Apr. 18	8:30 am - Noon	Visit Matilda Theiss Health and Child Development Center Dr. Vaughn Stagg, Director
Apr. 27	4:15-6:30	Program Assessment & Presentation Ms. Cassandra King-Richardson Kemp Urban Principal, Oliver High School
		Cultural Dinner Mrs. Mary Harvey, Community Resident

Cooperating Teachers are welcome to attend any seminar or on-site visit.

PREPARING TO TEACHER STUDENTS OF DIVERSE BACKGROUNDS

Once a year a "special" workshop entitled, *Preparing to Teaching Students of Diverse Backgrounds* is conducted at both universities for all students who are participating in the Urban program the following academic year. University faculty are invited and often accompany their students. The purpose of this workshop is to reinforce students' aspirations for student teaching in an urban setting. The following summary statements were generated from students who attended this workshop. It is interesting to note that these comments come from students who have taken multicultural education courses, but still have many concerns regarding urban education.

URBAN STUDENT TEACHING WORKSHOP
PREPARING TO TEACH STUDENTS OF DIVERSE BACKGROUNDS
PRESENTER: VINCENT GUIDER

"Your presentation was excellent and straight to the point. I learned more about life in general the last 2 1/2 hours than I have learned in my past four years here at the university. Your knowledge of different cultures and beliefs have encouraged me to do more research and follow-up with my own culture and others.

Thank you for being a role model for me, as a African American male and elementary teacher. I am very glad I was able to attend."

"Your presentation was outstanding! As I prepare to go into the urban teaching program this fall, my fear is that as a white female I may be regarded as the epitome of all that is evil and oppressive. However, I am very much looking forward to the experience. Your suggestion of getting involved in the community is right on target. I am moving to the inner-city of Pittsburgh in July and your advice is priceless. Thank you very much."

"I thought this workshop was great. You are very motivational and inspiring. I am looking forward to teaching in the urban program this fall. I will take this information with me and I thank you. You have given me new perspectives and views."

"Thank you so much for giving such a wonderful presentation! I have learned so much. It is good to get views from someone other than a 'white' person because it gives a new view. I feel your presentation was also very motivating. It makes me want to go out and learn about other cultures. I definitely have a new outlook. Thank you once again for a moving presentation."

" I think that Vince was an excellent speaker. He opened my eyes to some real issues that exist in the world today. I also enjoyed the handout that really 'spelled' out some of the differences between Europeans, African-Americans etc. It depicted a very vivid picture to me and a greater understanding of our differences. I also realize that it

was just a generalization. Thank you for your insight into this topic. It was well worth my time."

"Very nice job! I feel like I got up for something worthwhile and that's not easy on a Saturday morning."

"When I first decided to do the urban program, I knew it would be different but I believed I could handle it because I feel that deep down all kids want the same thing; love, attention, and respect. Then, everyone that I talked to told me that I was crazy and didn't know what I was getting myself into. I started to worry that maybe they were right and I began to develop fear that I didn't have. Now, after attending your workshop I am back to feeling confident in myself and I realize that it will be what I make of it."

"I really enjoyed listening to you. I was surprised to see that others had the same fears that I have. This seemed to reassure me that although I had these fears I was still making the best decision for myself. Thank you for taking the time to give us some reality about the inner-city."

"I was not sure what this workshop was going to be like and I have to admit that I was afraid I would be sitting listening to a drone lecture. I was pleasantly surprised by this workshop. You kept my attention, made me feel that you cared and most importantly, you educated me."

"This workshop was very informative. Yet, it is a shame it was over too soon. You did an excellent job with the time you had. Thank you for taking the time to do this and thank you for centering it around our concerns and questions."

REACTIONS TO URBAN STUDENT TEACHING EXPERIENCES

QUESTION: *Now that you have experienced teaching in an urban setting, would you consider a career as an urban teacher?*

"I would in a minute."

"Yes, I would definitely consider it. Now that I have completed the program, I have confidence in myself and in my ability to teach in any setting."

"Yes, I am hoping to be hired by the Pittsburgh School District."

"Most definitely! There is something special about them (the students) that makes them great."

"Definitely! I've already applied."

"Yes, as a matter of fact that is my aim."

"Definitely, I feel very comfortable and well-prepared for teaching in the urban school setting."

Question: *What did you learn about yourself and urban teaching that you want to remember?*

". . . I can teach in a city and manage the classroom successfully."

"I have learned to have more self confidence, creativity, and resourcefulness. I have also learned to be more assertive and risk taking. You have to be willing to take risks and not fear failure. One of those risks might turn into something great."

"I learned my students need someone to channel their energy toward bigger and better things. I learned that I can indeed teach. This is what I should be doing. I feel comfortable knowing that I can be an effective leader in the classroom."

"I want to remember this feeling of succeeding after doubting whether I could or not."

"I have learned that children are children regardless of their race, color, or ethnic background."

"I have learned something that I have always suspected-that there is quality to love in every child regardless of race, background, or experience."

QUESTION: *Do you think teachers can be a "beacon of hope" to urban children?*

"Yes, these children must see that a better life can be achieved through education."

"Teachers who will be beacons of hope for all children will be those who persevere in getting to know their students and who become influential in strengthening the families of today and tomorrow."

"If students want your help. There is always students who need you to make a difference for them. They are easy to find."

"Yes, and it is easy to do. I learned to be positive and reinforce the children."

"Definitely, I have seen it happen in my current assignment. One of my lower functioning students has started to attach himself to me and begin to trust me even more which has helped his attitude and school work greatly."

"Definitely! For most of these children the teachers are the only constant in their lives. They need the encouragement and hope that the teachers give them."